

SOCIAL MEDIA

Playful FWP Fisheries social media crew racks up followers and awards

One video explains the cuss words you might hear while ice fishing. A poster introduces a new word to the English language—"fishstancing"—to define social distancing during the Covid 19 pandemic in terms of fish length, as in: "Stay two shovelnose sturgeon away from each other." A Chopping Dance meme explains an invasive-clam removal project on Lake Elmo. And a viral video depicts a biologist singing his own version of Tai Verdes's song "AOK" while being "KOK" counting kokanee salmon redds.

These creations and more of the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Fisheries Division are part of the weekly #FisheriesFriday feature on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The award-winning social media postings began in early 2019, and not a single Friday has gone fishless since, adding up to roughly 300 posts.

"We fish people are inherently weird and creative," says Zach Shattuck, an FWP fisheries biologist. "We're always looking for new and creative ways of looking at fish."

#Fisheries Friday is only one part of FWP's social media presence. The agency shares information with 60,000 followers on Facebook, 62,400 followers on Instagram, and 22,800 followers on Twitter. "#FisheriesFridays are definitely some of our most popular posts on social media," says Missy Erving, FWP web content manager.

The #FisheriesFriday crew started the campaign to build stronger connections with the public. "Science is facing a big challenge across the globe," says David Schmetterling, a #FisheriesFriday founder. "These days, anyone with an opinion is given the same credibility as scientists and others who have factual knowledge and years of experience."

Schmetterling says one #FisheriesFriday goal was to show the human side of FWP. "We wanted people to see who we are. If people know and trust you, they're more likely to accept the scientific information you provide" he says.

The features have evolved over time. Early posts were long and heavy on science.

But somewhere along the way, the crew hit the perfect balance of humor and education. Their "The crAy Team" series, a parody of the 1980s television series *The A-Team* featuring an underground team of fisheries biologists, won first place for social media campaigns in the 2022 national Association for Conservation Information awards competition. Their post for the Lake Elmo invasive clam removal project took second place.

"It's a challenge," says fisheries biologist Adam Strainer. "Fun has always been at the basis of all our posts. We want to be cheesy and goofy but also educational. Plus, we had to learn to say what we needed to say in a video that's three minutes or shorter."

Currently, the #FisheriesFriday creators are Schmetterling, Strainer, Shattuck, Erving, fisheries biologists Bryan Giordano and Shannon Blackburn, and regional Information and Education Program manager Chrissy Webb. The crew promises more fun, irreverent posts in the future. ■

To view future #FisheriesFriday posts, follow FWP on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.



CONSERVATION

New Montana Outdoor Hall-of-Famers

This past winter, the Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame announced its 2022 inductees at a ceremony in Helena.

The Hall of Fame was created in 2013 to honor individuals, both living and deceased, who made significant and lasting contributions to the restoration and conservation of Montana's wildlife and wild places. The awards recognize Montana's historical and contemporary conservation leaders while capturing the stories of these individuals as a way to raise public awareness of conservation in Montana.

"It is important to recognize the contributions of people who continue to make Montana such a special place," Patrick Graham, former FWP director and retired executive director of The Nature Conservancy in Arizona, said at the banquet honoring the inductees. "None of it gets done by one person. It is a network of people often working over many years."

To read more about the 14 inductees listed here and other conservation heroes honored in 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020, visit mtoutdoorhalloffame.org.

1. Stan Bradshaw, Helena. *Stream and river public access protection.*
2. Bruce Bugbee, Missoula. *Public land protection.*
3. Harrison G. Fagg, Billings. *Hard rock mining and other environmental standards.*
4. John G. Gatchell, Helena. *Wilderness protection.*
5. Kathleen Hadley, Deer Lodge. *River protection, fish and wildlife conservation.*
6. Land M. Lindbergh, Greenough. *Private land conservation and public access.*
7. Robert "Bob" Marshall (1901-1939). *Wilderness protection.*
8. John R. Murray, Browning. *Badger-Two Medicine designation as a Traditional Cultural District.*
9. Christine Torgimson (British Columbia) and 10. Barbara Rusmore (Bozeman). *Private ag land and public river protection.*
11. Bradley B. Shepard (1952-2021). *Cutthroat trout conservation.*
- 12, 13, and 14. The Three Yayas: Annie Pierre (1900-1975), Louise McDonald (1904-1994), and Christine Woodcock (1910-1986). *Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness protection.*

